



BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

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Registered Charity No: 528981

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BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS



**THE BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL
GARDENS**
TURN OVER A NEW LEAF

**FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL GARDENS NEWSLETTER**

AUTUMN 2013

Opening Times 2013

The Gardens are open every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day from **10.00 am**.

Closing Times

1st October to 31st March: Doors close at **5.00 pm**
Weekends at 6.00pm (The Gardens will close at dusk if earlier)

Admission Prices

	Prices
Family *	£22
Adult or Two Adults	£7 or £12
Groups **	£6 (adult) or £4 (concessions)
Concessions	£4.75
Children under 5	FREE
SHOP	FREE

*Family ticket = 2 adults and up to 3 concessions.

** Pricing valid for groups of 10 or more. School visits are priced separately.

Please Note: all prices include a 10% donation as part of the Gift Aid scheme.

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Membership Options

Family Membership £65 – allows entry for up to 5 people
 From the same family

Annual Membership £40 – allows entry for 2 people from the same family

Single Membership £35

Guest Ticket £13 – may be purchased by Annual, Family or Single Members only and allows entry for one other person

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are pleased to sponsor the Botanical Gardens Newsletter and feel lucky to be so close to these wonderful Gardens.

We and our clients can look out on our own gardens as we discuss legal matters.

If you have any queries please contact us on **0121 693 2222**

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Alexander Garden (1730-91), of Scottish parentage, was a physician and noted botanist in South Carolina. He is remembered in the *Gardenia*.



Levels of knowledge increased markedly from the sixteenth century onwards, but as these examples show, it remained possible for one person to have academic expertise in several disciplines. By the nineteenth century this was much more difficult and medicine and botany began to separate. Interest in botany had also widened into a desire to know and understand all plants. Thus, the task of the botanic garden had also expanded.

However, the link with medicine continued as the foundation of Birmingham's Botanical Gardens demonstrates. More recently, when threats to the unique natural habitat of Madagascar were a major news story, one argument for its conservation was that the flora might contain undiscovered medicines which should not be lost.

- The Gerard Path at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens commemorates the early botanist.
- Medicinal plants are grown in the Herb Garden, next to the Cottage Garden.
- Many medicinal and other economic plants are labelled around the Gardens.
- Members have free admission to Oxford Botanic Garden.

Sources:

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FRIENDS CRAFT FAIR

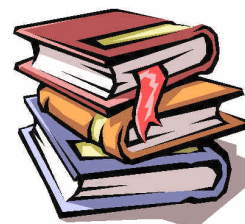
SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2013

The Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens will be holding their annual Craft Fair on Sunday 17 November from 10 – 4pm. In 2012 we had over 40 stalls selling a great variety of interesting things including jewellery, clothing items, cards and preserves. We are hoping for the same interest in 2013.

In the afternoon the Salvation Army will be singing carols in the Palm House followed by the Bournville Young Singers. We have been lucky to have these choirs for several years and they certainly bring the Christmas spirit to the afternoon.

Please make a note in your diary. Bring family and friends for an inspirational pre Christmas shopping spree.

Best wishes
Rosemary Radford
Chairman of the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens



We will as usual be holding the Friends Book Sale in February next year and will welcome any good quality books being handed in at reception from January onwards

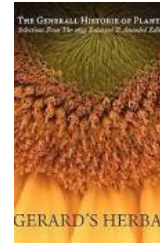
Nerine bowdenii



Named after a water nymph of Greek legend, Nerine, and bowdenii after Athelstan Hall Cornish-Bowden, who is credited with introducing the plant into British gardens in 1902, *Nerine* gives a spectacular floral display of pink, lily-like blooms with recurved petals in autumn. It can be seen on the terrace and in a swathe of pink on Paxton's Prospect.

The flowers are produced after the leaves have died back which gives the unusual architectural look of the stems coming erect from the ground. Found in mountain screes of South Africa, in Europe they benefit from being at the base of a south facing wall, in fertile free draining compost, keeping the bulbs warm and dry in summer while dormant. Bulbs are fully hardy, but early frost can kill off flowers.

This is a great plant for prolonged floral interest in the autumn. It is also spectacular in a greenhouse or conservatory where frosts will not bring the floral display to a halt and can produce cut flowers through to Christmas.



Many earlier botanists were also medical men. John Gerard, author of the ground-breaking herbal of 1597, ended his career as Master of the Company of Barber-Surgeons.

Some are remembered in the botanical names of plants.

The *Fuchsia* was named after the German physician, Leonhart Fuchs (1501-66). His herbal of 1542 coined several plant names including *Digitalis* for the *Foxglove*.



Guillaume Rondelet (1507-66), commemorated in the *Rondeletia*, was professor of natural history and medicine at Montpellier in France.

Mathias de l'Obel (1538-1616), remembered in the *Lobelia*, was a Flemish botanist and physician to James I in England.



Rudbeckia preserves the name of Olof Rudbeck (1630-1702), professor of medicine at Uppsala University in Sweden where he founded the botanic garden. Tragically, the manuscripts and several thousand woodblocks for his planned work on all known plants were burnt in a great fire at the university in 1702.

The Medical Connection by Sally Dickson

In 1801 a botanical garden in Birmingham was proposed by a local medical man, James Clarke, a druggist. Thirty years later the idea was revived by two more medical men, James Armitage, a manufacturing chemist, and John Darwall, a physician, and the Gardens were established.



Botany began as a branch of medicine with the task of discovering medical remedies in plants. Botanical gardens aided this research. Oxford University's botanic garden was founded in 1621 and in 1673 the Chelsea Physic Garden was founded by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries.



Dr Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), who trained at Edinburgh Medical School, developed a strong interest in botany, enjoying a garden of his own after his second marriage had taken him to Derby. His two-volume poetical treatise entitled *The Botanic Garden* brought him considerable fame.

A colleague in Birmingham's Lunar Society, Dr William Withering (1741-99), discovered the medical importance of the *Foxglove*. His son was a patron of Birmingham's Gardens.



Callicarpa bodinieri var. *giraldii* 'Profusion'



Callicarpa bodinieri has striking, long lasting violet-purple berries appearing in autumn that contrast with the golden purple tinged leaves, on this bushy, upright deciduous shrub. Its name comes from the Greek word *callicarpus* meaning "with beautiful fruits".

This striking plant is grown also for its attractive bronze purple young foliage, which can look as great in a vase, as do the autumn bare branches that are laden with berries. It can be ideally situated in either a woodland or in a shrub border, in full sun or partial shade.

They fruit most prolifically after a long hot summer and it's advisable to grow them in groups to encourage better fruiting, 'Profusion' however, is a good cultivar that appears to fruit well on its own.

Euphorbia pulcherrima (poinsettia)



In its native Central America the poinsettia is now classed as a weed, but the Aztecs knew the plant well and valued it greatly. They named it "Cuetlaxochitl" which means mortal flower. To them it was a symbol of purity and a reminder of the blood sacrifice as well as being a valuable red dye and medicine against fever.

Franciscan priests took over its symbolism when introducing Christianity into Mexico and changed its meaning from purity and blood sacrifice to represent the blood of Christ in their celebration of Christmas. The red coloured 'flowers' on the plant are actually highly coloured leaves called bracts; the actual flower is pretty insignificant and located at the centre of each bract.

The plant needs to be kept moist but not waterlogged in an open, well-aerated compost. It must be kept in a warm spot away from draughts otherwise leaf drop will occur. Poinsettias are photoperiodic and will only initiate their colourful bracts and flowers when the total amount of light they receive is less than twelve hours a day – making it the ideal Christmas gift!

Lapageria rosea (Chilean bellflower)



With extravagant, rose-pink flowers contrasting dramatically with rich green foliage, this evergreen climber is certainly one of the garden's gems.

The name *Lapageria* commemorates Josephine Lapagerie, the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte and an enthusiastic patron of botany. *Lapageria* is native to South America, and in Chile, it is the national flower.

The species climbs naturally through the branches of shrubs and trees in moist forest habitats, and is pollinated by hummingbirds. Sadly, the plant is now endangered in the wild, through over-collection and forest clearance.

- These are some of the plants of the month for the next few months at the Gardens. For other plants that look spectacular in these months see the website